

**AUGUSTA REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION STUDY  
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING  
ROOM 803, MUNICIPAL BUILDING, AUGUSTA, GEORGIA  
THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2009, 11:00 A.M.**

**Voting Members present:**

Deke Copenhaver, Mayor of Augusta – **Vice-Chairman**  
C. H. Williams, Mayor of Burnetown  
Sandra Korbelik (representing Fred Cavanaugh, Mayor of Aiken)  
Stephen Strohming (representing Ronnie Young, Chairman, Aiken County Council)  
Ron Cross, Chairman, Columbia Co. Commission – **Chairman**  
John Curry (representing Col John Holwick – Fort Gordon)  
Robert Buchwitz, Chairman Hephzibah Commission  
Radney Simpson (representing Gerald Ross, GA DOT Commissioner)

**Voting Members absent:**

George James, Mayor of Grovetown  
Tom Cobb, Mayor of Blythe  
Henry Taylor, SC – 2<sup>nd</sup> Congressional District Commissioner, ½  
Charles Dalton, SC – 3<sup>rd</sup> District Highway Commissioner, ½

**Others Present (N = Nonvoting Member)**

**Augusta-Richmond Co. Planning Commission**

George Patty  
Paul DeCamp  
Lynn Russell  
Marya Moultrie

**Columbia County**

Ronnie Hutto  
Scott Herring  
Matt Schlachter

**SC DOT**

Michael Dennis  
Jim Frierson  
Kevin Gantt

**City of North Augusta**

Skip Grkovic

**FHWA**

Chetna Dixon

**GA DOT**

George Brewer  
Vonda Everett  
Cissy McNure  
Karen Quarles  
Mike Keene

**City of Augusta**

Heyward Johnson  
David Griffith

**Aiken County**

Stephen Strohming  
Gerald Jefferson

**LSCOG**

Lynnda Bassham

**INVOCATION AND INTRODUCTIONS**

**1. Election of Officers**  
**(a) Chairman**

Mr. Cross nominated Mayor Copenhagen to serve as Chairman. Nominations were closed.

Mr. Simpson moved to approve Mayor Copenhagen as Chairman. Mr. Grkovic seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**(b) Vice Chairman**

Mayor Copenhagen nominated Mr. Cross to serve as Vice-Chairman. Nominations were closed.

Mr. Simpson moved to approve Mr. Cross as Vice-Chairman. Mayor Williams seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**2. Consider approval of the minutes of the Policy Committee meetings held on December 4, 2008.**

Mr. Simpson moved to approve the minutes of December 4, 2008. Mayor Copenhagen seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

**3. Consider a request from the City of Aiken to approve the following projects as Special Studies:**

- (a) Hire a consultant for a study of the Dougherty Road (S-419) Corridor. The total project amount of \$90,000 would draw \$72,000 from WE 4.13 #Special Studies” in the FY 2010 UPWP to fund 80% of the project. The City of Aiken would match the remaining 20% or \$18,000.**

Mr. Jefferson and Mrs. Korbelik presented this item. The Dougherty Road study is a small project. This is a one mile section of Dougherty Road from Silver Bluff Road to Whiskey Road. The City would to use the right-of-way to construct turn lanes, curb and gutter, storm water management and possibly a basic level of service traffic study. This is currently a two lane facility that will be widened to a three lanes.

Mayor Copenhagen moved to approve this project as Special Studies Project. Mr. Grkovic seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

- (b) Hire a consultant for a corridor study of C Hwy 19 from Hampton Avenue to Shiloh Church Road. The total project amount of \$125,000 would draw \$100,000 from WE 4.13 “Special Studies” in the FY 2010 to fund 80% of the project. The City of Aiken would match the remaining 20% or \$25,000.**

Mr. Jefferson and Mrs. Korbelik presented this item. The widening of SC Hwy. 19 from I-20 to Shiloh Church Road (S-153) is in the Long Range Transportation Plan. The portion of SC Hwy. 19 from

Hampton Avenue to I-20 is listed as priority #9 in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). SC Hwy. 19 is one of the main entryways into the city and has experienced increased traffic volumes. The City would like to have the network study completed prior to this corridor study to determine its role on any future intersections that might be required.

Mayor Copenhagen moved to approve this project as Special Studies Project. Mayor Williams seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

- 4. Consider a request from Aiken County to recommend an air shed boundary for the South Carolina side smaller than the Augusta –Richmond County MSA before EPA establishes new boundaries in March 2010. If approved, a letter of support from the ARTS will be forwarded to the Governor of South Carolina and South Carolina DHEC**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. Aiken County Planning and Development did write a letter in January to suggest that the air shed boundary not include the Jackson monitor because the air shed monitor in Jackson is giving incorrect readings and is outside of the urbanized area, Aiken County feels this monitor should not be included in the determination of nonattainment for Aiken County. Aiken County was notified that SC DHEC will not accept this suggestion, so no action is necessary on this item.

- 5. Consider the following amendments to the FY 2008 – 2011 Transportation Improvement Plan and Year 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan:**

- (a) Amend the Purpose and Need Statement for the proposed Silver Bluff Road widening project to include the term “corridor improvements” as recommended by SC DOT. The new sentence should read: “Silver Bluff Road should be improved for Operational, Safety, Corridor Improvements, and Intersection Improvements...”**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. The term “corridor improvements” was recommended by SCDOT in a meeting held last November to discuss the Silver Bluff Road widening project. The amendment will help meet requirements related to South Carolina Act 114.

Mayor Copenhagen moved to approve this amendment to the TIP. Mr. Grkovic seconded. The motion was approved unanimously

- (b) The South Carolina Policy Subcommittee recommendation to add \$2,963,424.00 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds and add the following projects to be funded with the ARRA sub-allocation:**

- 1) List of various maintenance projects (see attached)**
- 2) List of various paving projects in North Augusta (see attached)**
- 3) Whiskey Road corridor improvement project in Aiken (see attached)**
- 4) West Avenue Extension and US 25 / Walnut Lane intersection projects in North Augusta**

Mr. Dennis and Mr. Jefferson presented this item. The lists are attached to the agenda. The list labeled 120-day ARTS Stimulus Projects has a total of \$3,778,000 for maintenance projects. This includes

projects in Edgefield County that are not in the ARTS area. The other lists have paving projects in North Augusta, corridor improvement for Whiskey Road and intersection improvements for West Avenue Extension and US / 25 Walnut Lane. The signal system for Whiskey Road is not listed but should be included in the amount of \$400,000.

The lists includes projects in surrounding areas for a couple reasons – to get the list out as soon as possible and to show the MPO and counties what is coming in the area and surrounding areas. The MPO will determine which should be included in the TIP.

Mr. Dennis stated that the second phase of the resurfacing includes an additional \$50 million for the State of South Carolina. Five additional projects should be added for these projects. District 7 which includes Aiken County, Bamberg, Orangeburg, Allendale and other counties will have an additional \$7.2 million. There are five projects in the ARTS area that should be added for inclusion of these funds: SC 125 Connector from Martintown to Jefferson Davis, SC 19 from Colleton Ave. to Hitchcock Parkway, US 25 from I-20 to the Edgefield County Line and US 25 from Kerr Drive to Edgefield Drive.

Mrs. Korbelik suggested that SC DOT and city governments coordinate so that resurfacing is done after any necessary utility work in order to avoid resurfacing a street twice.

Mayor Copenhagen moved to approve these amendments to the TIP. Mr. Grkovic second. The motion was approved unanimously.

- (c) Add \$3,318,716.00 in Section 5307 Capital Assistance funds and \$300,000.00 in Section 5311 Capital Assistance funds for Augusta Public Transit. These funds have been allocated under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)**

Mr. Johnson presented this item. Seventeen percent of the \$3.3 million is allocated for Aiken Transit. The correct amount of Section 5311 Capital Assistance funds for rural transit service in Richmond County is \$300,000 instead of \$150,000. This will include bike racks for all the buses.

Mr. Simpson move to approve this amendment. Mayor Copenhagen seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

- (d) Add \$8,600,000.00 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds for eligible transportation projects in the Georgia part of the ARTS area.**

Mr. Patty presented this item. We respectfully request that the Committees postpone action on this particular agenda item. Sixty-six percent of these funds come from the state and 32% comes to the MPO. We have received good project ideas from both counties and are still evaluating those. We are waiting on information on how the State of Georgia will allocate their portion of the economic stimulus funds.

We have one year from the date the law was passed (February 17, 2009) in which to obligate the funds to projects. By obligation that means a project is in the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan, the ARTS Transportation Improvement Program and the State Transportation Improvement Program and in the

FHWA financial management system. We anticipate having the project list within the next two weeks and will have a special called meeting to deal with this issue and others related to the stimulus package.

**No action was taken on this item.**

#### **5. Consider approving the final FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program.**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The Unified Planning Work Program is a document that is prepared and updated each year that covers the entire study area. The document covers the work elements and activities that the staff at the local, state and federal levels conduct on behalf of the transportation planning process. A ten-page summary of the final UPWP was attached to the agenda. The summary includes a description of each work element and the total estimated budget for the program year that will begin July 1, 2009. The work elements mirror the work elements in the current year and cover transportation planning, transit planning air quality and intermodal planning.

The draft UPWP was approved by the Policy Committee on December 4, 2008. Since that time, the entire document was finalized and submitted to the federal and state agencies for comment. Most of the comments received were programmatic, such as including additional language to reflect the outcome of the certification review completed in September 2008. None of the comments impacts the overall budget or the general scope of the work elements.

The update of the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) will be the top priority special study project in 2010. Even though the deadline for completing the LRTP update is not until September 2010, work will begin on the project 12 to 15 months prior to adoption. As part of the recertification of ARTS, recommendations were made for the following projects - updating the Bike and Pedestrian Plan that was prepared in 2002 and update the ITS Plan prepared in 2001. Special studies may be completed on these and other projects with any funds not committed to the LRTP update.

Mr. Simpson moved to approve the final FY 2010 UPWP. Mayor Copenhaver seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### **4. Update on Special Studies Projects:**

##### **(c) Regional Freight Study**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. The Freight Study is close to completion. Within the last couple of weeks we have been cleaning up the document with the consultant. There were a few minor errors in the final report. The study will be ready at the end of this month. The Regional Freight Study has been ongoing for about one year. A consultant was hired to evaluate the movement of truck and rail freight into and through, and out of the regional with a specific objective to have an idea of how much tonnage is going in and out, where it is going, what routes are most heavily travelled and to identify any bottle necks, any locations where we can make improvements that will help improve the freight movement in and out of the region. The final report will include improvement projects that can be included in the ARTS Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program. In addition to the final report, there will be a separate document with a profile of the region's freight transportation system.

**(d) APT Transit Development Plan**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. Two public meeting were held in February. One was held in the Municipal Building and one at the Diamond Lakes Recreation Center in South Augusta. There are non-rider surveys out to get the whole community involved. The school board has been solicited to help distribute the surveys with their employees. Fort Gordon is also helping with surveys along with several area industries. Another round of public meeting will be held in May to review the survey results and related information. The Transit Development Plan is scheduled to be completed in August 2009.

**(e) City of Aiken Corridor Studies**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. The City of Aiken issued an RFQ for consultants on the North Side Traffic Study. The scope of services included creating new TAZs, recommending future road locations and future road designs. The area of study includes US 1 and SC 19 north of Aiken. The list of consultants has been cut from eight down to three. This will be tied in with the regional model project to gain a better understanding of modeling work needed in the city of Aiken.

**5. Update on Air Quality Initiatives**

**(a) Aiken County**

Mr. Jefferson presented this item. Aiken County did not submit an application under the Sustainable Skylines Program due to a shortage of funds and staff to implement some of the projects envisioned as part of the initiative. Aiken County is still looking at publications and other initiatives that would be more prudent to implement.

**(b) Richmond County**

Mr. DeCamp presented this item. All of Richmond County has been recommended for designation as an ozone non-attainment area by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division. Between now and November, U.S. EPA will review the recommendation from state air quality agencies and will publish their recommendations in November. This will trigger a public comment period. There will be an opportunity for the public to give their comments directly to EPA regarding non-attainment designations. It will also trigger the start of a 120-day period in which the state air quality agencies will have more discussions with EPA about the boundaries of non-attainment areas. EPA will have to finalize the designations by March 2010. Stakeholder air quality meetings have been held periodically for the past two years. The next stakeholders' meeting is scheduled for next Wednesday, April 1, 2009 at the Julian Smith Barbecue Pit on Milledge Road from 1 – 3pm. You are invited to come to the meeting. A lot of useful information and speakers on the non attainment designations will be on hand. You will hear more details on non attainment and the impact of the designation on the transportation system. Presentations from the meeting will be posted to the CSRA Air Quality Alliance website as soon as possible

**8. Status of Projects:**

(a) **Georgia Highways**

Ms. Everett presented this item. There are no major changes since the last update. Projects scheduled to be let in the next three months include:

- Resurfacing SR 28 from Sand Bar Ferry Bridge to East Boundary
- Resurfacing SR 56 Spur from SR 56 to SR 10
- Proposed steel beam repair at 14 locations statewide
- Resurfacing SR 104 (Reynolds Street) from SR 4 / US 25 BU to NW of 15<sup>th</sup> Street
- Resurfacing SR 104 (Jones Street) from NW of 15<sup>th</sup> Street to SR 4 / US 25 BUS
- William Few Parkway Extension – The FONSI was submitted to FHWA. The Preliminary Field Plan Review is tentatively scheduled for May 1, 2009
- Flowing Wells Road Widening – The work on this project has stopped. Waiting on results of Value Engineering study
- Alexander Drive Widening – One parcel left to be acquired. Final plans are 92% complete. The let date has been changed to August 2009
- Old Petersburg / Old Evans Road Widening – Right-of-Way acquisition has resumed
- Wrightsboro Road Widening - Right-of-Way acquisition has resumed
- I-520 from Gordon Highway to US 1 (Deans Bridge Road) – Corrections are being made to the Categorical Exclusion (environmental review determination) in response to FHWA comments.
- Windsor Spring Road Widening (Phases IV and V) – GDOT approved right-of-way plans for Phase IV (P.I. # 250610) on February 18, 2009. On Phase V, a Preliminary Field Plan review will be held in late summer with right-of-way plans targeted for approval in the spring of 2010.

(b) **South Carolina Highways**

Mr. Gantt presented this item.

- **East Buena Vista Avenue** - This project has been surveyed. We are waiting on the survey for Atomic Road to develop the corridor. Changes will be made to this project and Atomic Road. The corridors will be pursued together but each will retain separate Project Identification Numbers.
- **Atomic Road** - This corridor is being surveyed in conjunction with the East Buena Vista corridor.
- **Silver Bluff** - (Indian Trail to Richardson Lake Road) - Plans for the corridor intersections have been sent to environmental for review, Once correspondence is received from the Committee with the go ahead to move forward a meeting will be scheduled.
- **Intersection Improvement** (Silver Bluff/Dougherty) - Plans are complete. Requesting Environmental Document.

(c) **Augusta Public Transit**

Mr. Johnson presented this item. Last fall the Augusta Commission requested that \$1.5 million be cut from the APT budget. To do this, Saturday service will be eliminated along with vacant positions, and a fare increase will be imposed. A public hearing was held in December to receive public input on these changes. Approximately 230 people were in attendance to voice their opinion that Saturday service is crucial and they would accept a fare increase. The Commission approved increasing fare from \$1.25 to \$1.50, transfers from \$0.30 to \$0.50 and kept Saturday service. The Commission will review the transit budget at midyear. Ridership is approximately the same as last year.

**(d) Aiken County Transit**

Mrs. Bassham presented this item. There are no major changes since the last meeting. Ridership continues to rise. Staff participated recently in the National Kickoff for the model grant to establish a Travel Management Coordination Center in the LSCOG office. A person looking for a way to use public transit will be able to contact the center and be connected with available transit services throughout the service area. Updated routing, scheduling and dispatch software will enable transit providers to coordinate services. Grant funds also will pay for the installation of automatic vehicle locators and data terminals on all transit vehicles. The MSAA initiative will help determine where the vehicles are, what the ridership really is and bring the transit system out there to the people who need it the most.

Staff will be traveling to Washington DC next week to accept award a National award for Leadership in transit coordination and enhancement. LSCOG is one of five agencies nationally that will receive an award presented by Secretary of Transportation Ray LaHood at the Capitol.

**Other Business**

Mr. DeCamp introduced Marya Moultre as the new Transportation Planner for the ARTS.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. A. Patty".

George A. Patty  
Project Director